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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000586

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SUBJECT: CONGO/BRAZZAVILLE: ASSISTANT SECRETARY JENDAYI FRAZER'S MEETING WITH REPUBLIC OF CONGO PRESIDENT AND AFRICAN UNION CHAIRMAN DENIS SASSOU-NGUESSO

REF: A. KINSHASA 00499

1B. KINSHASA 00350

1C. KINSHASA 00015

Classified By: CDA Mark J. Biedlingmaier, Reasons 1.4(B)(D)

11. (C) Summary: Assistant Secretary Frazer met with President Denis Sassou-Nguesso and Foreign Minister Rodolphe Adada for a tour d'horizon of African Union issues on April 3 immediately prior to Sassou's departure for a four-nation tour to Senegal, Nigeria, Benin and Ivory Coast. Dr. Frazer congratulated Sassou-Nguesso on the recent World Bank decision to grant HIPC debt relief to the Republic of Congo and noted that difficult steps remain before Completion Point could be achieved. She encouraged his efforts, as Chairman of the African Union, to mediate conflict situations in Darfur and Abidjan, and to endorse the participation of both UN and NATO forces in the AMIS re-hatting exercise. Sassou-Nguesso offered his views on Arab League support in the Darfur region and shared a cautious assessment of the Democratic Republic of Congo electoral process following two recent meetings with President Kabila. Sassou-Nguesso welcomed an opportunity to visit Washington, prior to the June 28 - July 2 Banjul Summit to discuss Darfur and his AU mandate with President Bush and Secretary Rice. End Summary.

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12. (U) During a brief visit to Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer met with ROC President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, Minister of Foreign Affairs Rodolphe Adada and Ambassador Martin Adouki, Foreign Policy Advisor to the President, to discuss a broad range of African Union and regional issues. Sassou-Nguesso delayed his departure for Dakar, Senegal, by several hours to accommodate this April 3 meeting with Dr. Frazer. Dr. Frazer was accompanied by Charge d'affaires Mark Biedlingmaier, Special Assistant Kendra Gaither, and Pol/FSN Brice Biabaro.

13. (C) Dr. Frazer opened the meeting by offering good wishes from President Bush and congratulated Republic of Congo on successful achievement of HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative) by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Sassou-Nguesso stated that Congo had to thank its many friends for this accomplishment, but added that postponing Completion Point to the year 2008 could prove risky and perhaps would allow too much time to make mistakes in the process. He noted satisfaction in discussions held with a visiting IMF team, March 22 - April 3, on the second review under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement. Sassou-Nguesso stated that the Republic of Congo was under great pressure and that it would make a "best effort" to strengthen good governance, reach international

standards in the transparent use of Congo's natural resources, and establish a consultative committee under the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) to oversee oil-related transactions.

¶4. (C) Turning to ROC's participation on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Frazer complimented Sassou-Nguesso on the excellent cooperation received to date from the Congo Permanent Representative based in New York. The President replied that he had had extended conversations with the PermRep, Ambassador Basile Ikouebe, during the visit of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to Brazzaville, March 19-21, and

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took this opportunity to map-out a strategy on several critical issues, e.g., Darfur, Ivory Coast, and the anticipated June elections in Democratic Republic of Congo.

¶5. (C) Dr. Frazer stated that, following meetings in Kinshasa the preceding day, she was concerned by reports that the DRC election might be postponed beyond the current June 18 date. Sassou-Nguesso, who had met privately with Joseph Kabilo on March 31, noted that DRC Vice President Azarias Ruberwa had decided to register for the elections, while UPADS representative, Etienne Tshisekedi, had declined to do so. He added that, although the security situation had improved since 2003, difficulties remained in the Kivu, Katanga and Ituri regions, and that negotiations with the LRA (La Resistance Seigneur) on the Uganda border would need to continue in full force. In response to Sassou-Nguesso's query as to whether it was a good sign or bad sign that Tshisekedi had decided not to register for the elections,

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Frazer replied that it was a bad sign, however, he should not be allowed to be as a "spoiler" to the overall process. Sassou-Nguesso concurred and likened Saketti to a "small pebble (irritant) in one's shoe."

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¶6. (C) Dr. Frazer praised the strong engagement of Foreign Minister Adada to resolve the Sudan/Darfur crisis, noting in particular passage of the AU Peace and Security Council decision of March 10 and UNSC Resolution 1663 of March 24. Sassou-Nguesso replied that the Government of Sudan maintains that a UN presence in Darfur is unnecessary and lobbied forcefully for Arab League support of AMIS to thwart the March 24 decision endorsing rehiring of the troops. Frazer noted that the UN is already present in the South, East and other transition areas, and that AU and NATO teams worked constructively in 2005 on strategic airlift support, planning, training, intelligence and other forms of assistance. She added that Sassou-Nguesso, as Chairman of the African Union, should work with Salim and others to advance the peace plan and that President Bush wished to move quickly on humanitarian aid and efforts to strengthen AMIS troops with NATO assets.

¶7. (C) Sassou-Nguesso explained that the AU has been totally preoccupied with the Chad/Sudan combat frontier and that in his meeting with Qadhafi in Tripoli, the warring parties agreed not to destabilize the region. He added that the Republic of Congo had already sent twelve advisors to the border region and that he would propose to Qadhafi, during a meeting scheduled later that day in Dakar, deploying an observer contingent to the area. Sassou-Nguesso stated that, in recent telephone contacts with Bashir and Qadhafi, Bashir (and the Sudanese Parliament) expressed strong disagreement to the presence of UN troops in Darfur. Bashir was apparently encouraged by the Arab League in Khartoum to accept a USD \$150 million contribution to AU operations in Darfur; however, Sassou-Nguesso believed that this initiative was a bad approach and took steps to ensure that the decision

of the AU and UNSC would prevail. He stressed that financial assistance to the AU for the next six months would be crucial to preclude ins tability prior to expiry of the AMIS mandate in Darfur.

¶8. (C) Sassou-Nguesso admitted that the intended intervention of the Arab League was a sensitive issue and that the period of transition, with deployment of 7000 troops, should be similar to the deployment facilitated earlier in Burundi. He stated that he met recently with members of the Sudanese opposition movement JEM (Justice and Equality Movement), led by Mohammed Khalil, and separately on March 30 with former Burundian President Pierre Boyoya, to discuss probable scenarios for UN troop presence under AU management coordinated by Peace and Security Council Chairman Konare. Sassou-Nguesso advised the USG to proceed cautiously on NATO engagement as he believed the Arab League would exploit this intervention to maximum public relations value and thereby seek to influence fence-sitters in the region. He recommended that the sides take advantage of this six month "experimental period" to accelerate talks in Abuja with representatives of JEM, Bashir and Obasanjo, and to concentrate on humanitarian support to the refugees who have been displaced during this crisis.

¶9. (C) Dr. Frazer closed the meeting by emphasizing President Bush's commitment to alleviating the suffering of the displaced refugees and his strong belief that NATO should assist the efforts of AMIS and UN peacekeepers in the region with planning, logistics, intelligence, and communication resources. She explained that UN troops were spread thin along the southern border region and that it would be unwise to withdraw or redeploy assets at this time. Sassou-Nguesso said he would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues, and his mandate as Chairman of the African Union, with President Bush and Secretary Rice prior to the scheduled June 28 - July 2 Summit in Banjul.

¶10. (U) Brazzaville Embassy Office - Biedlingmaier

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